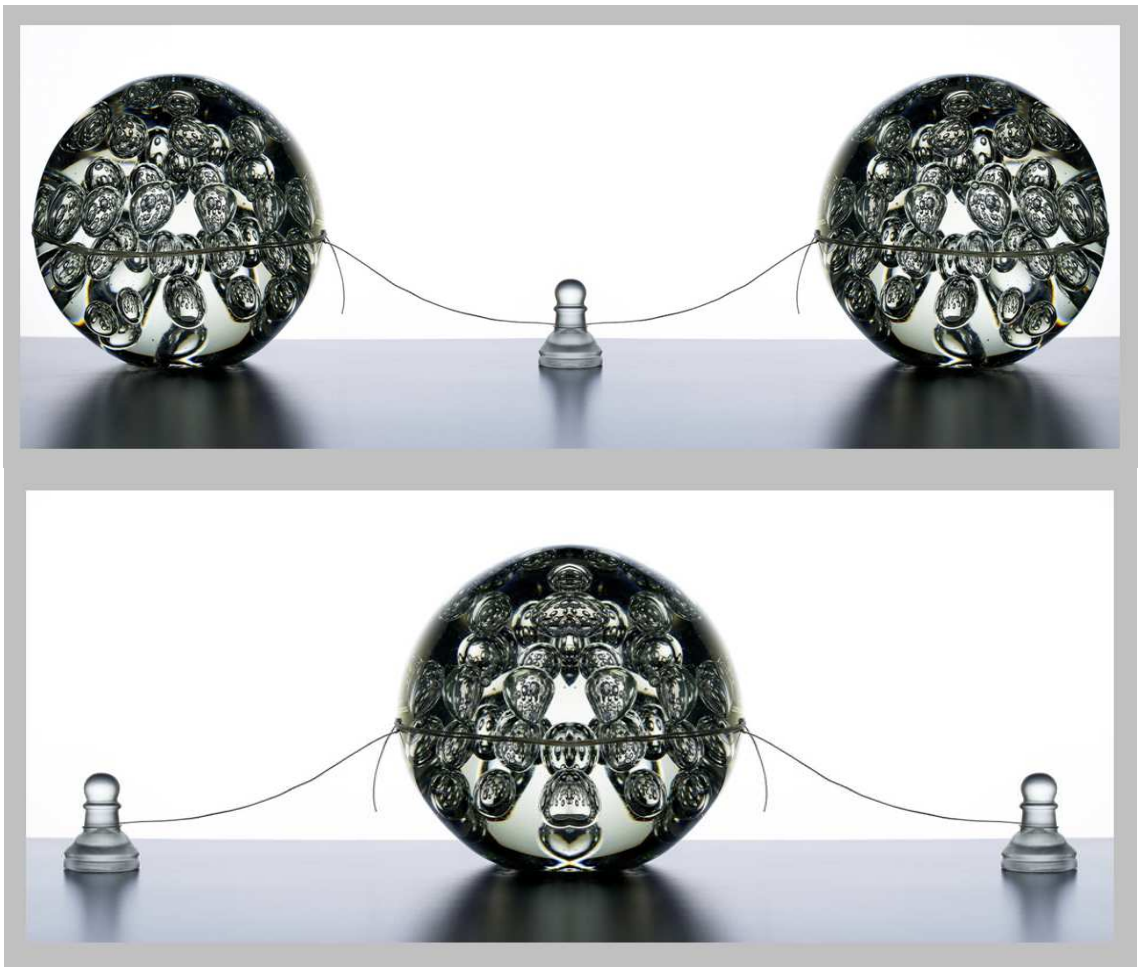
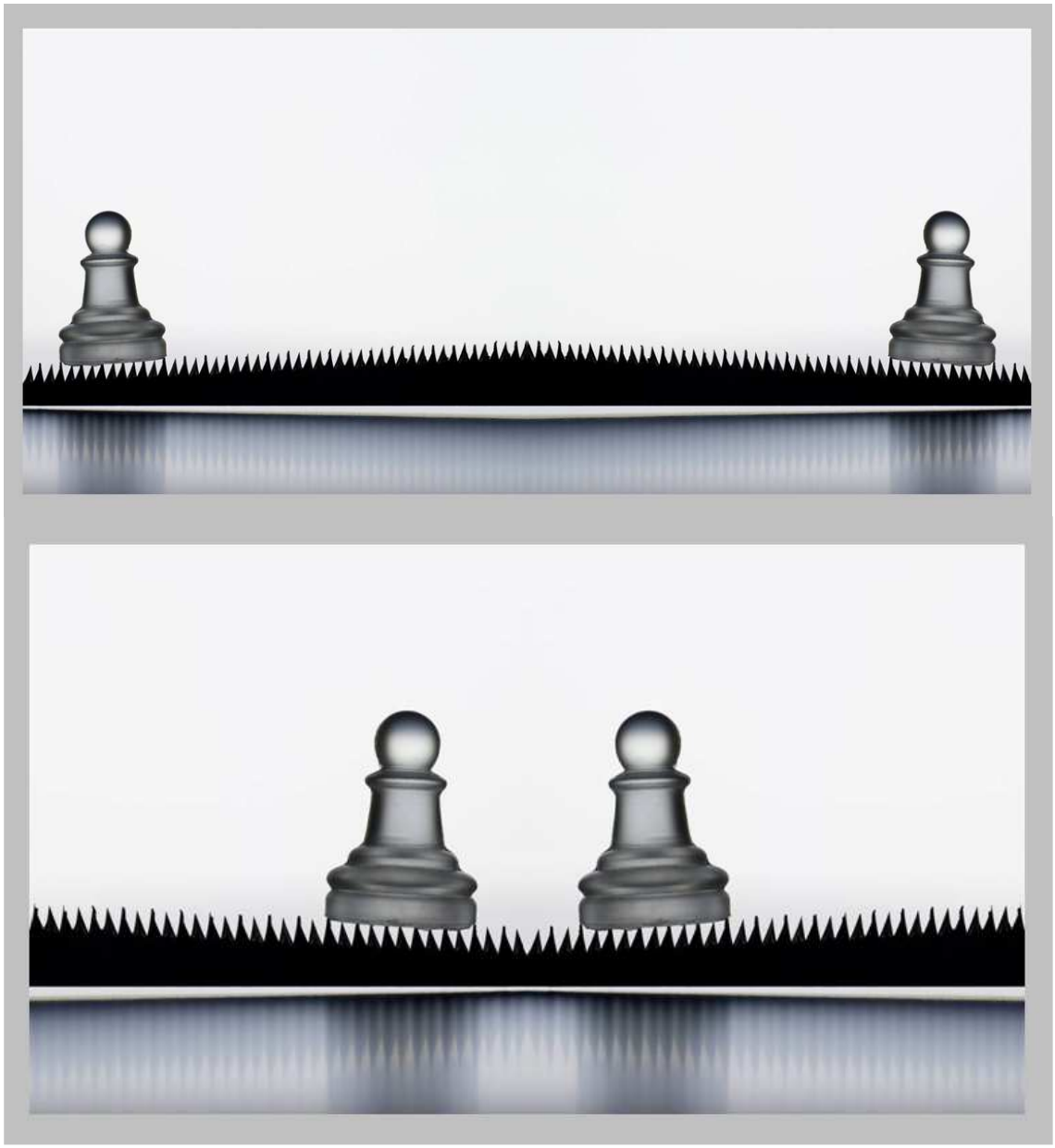
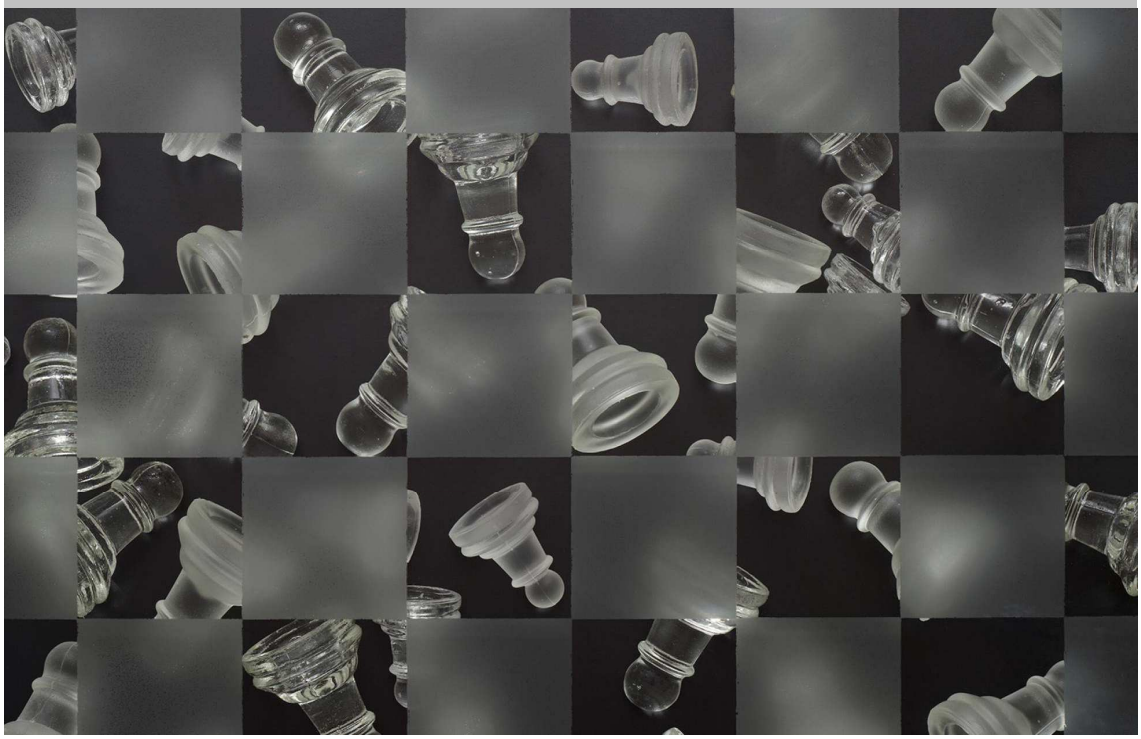
Tierra de Muchas Aguas

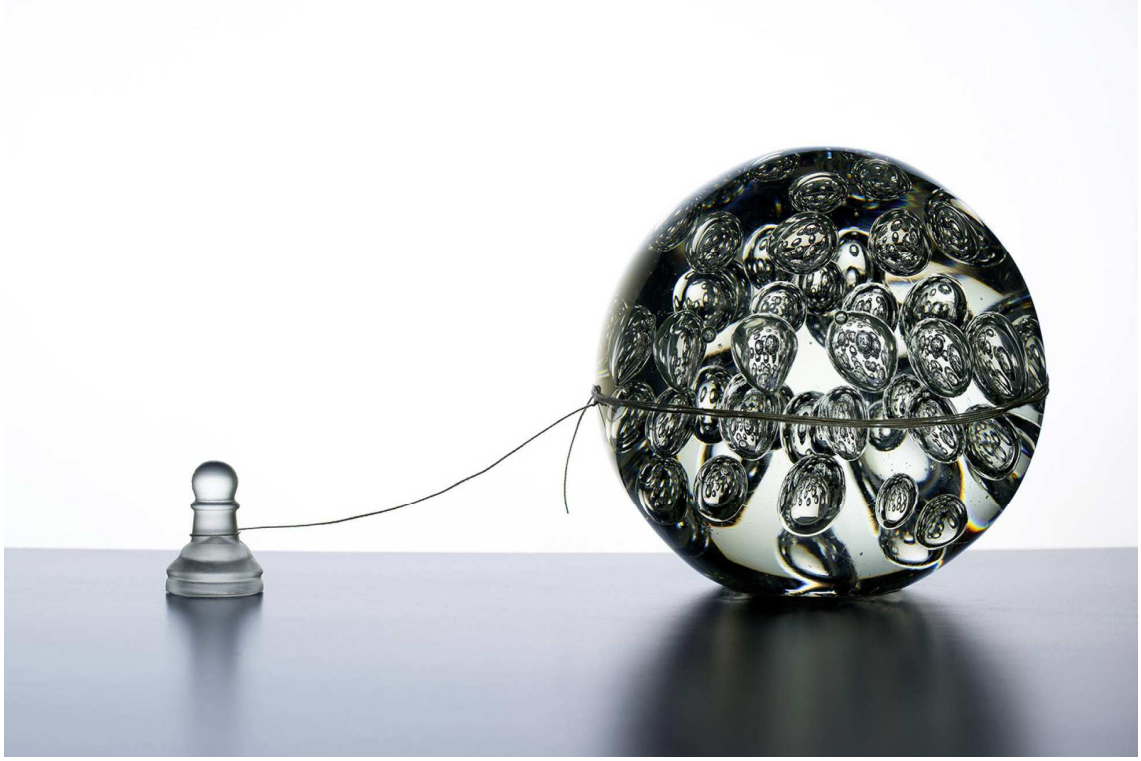
msv - 824

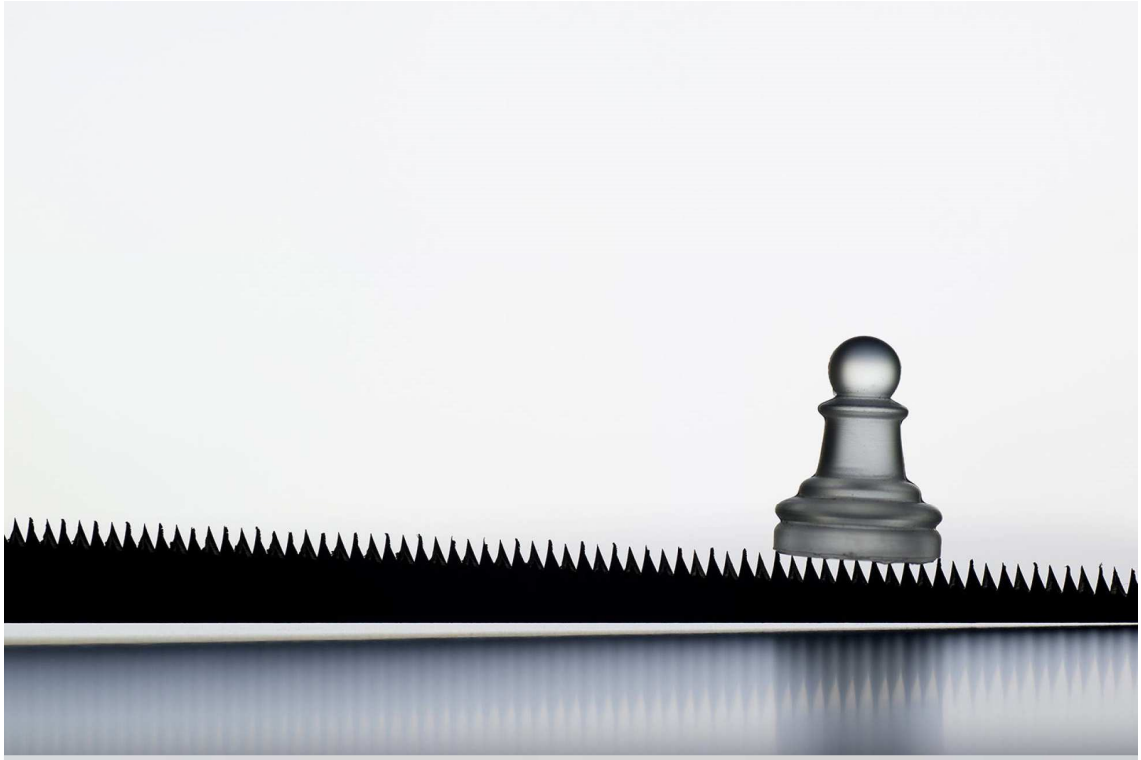
García de Marina

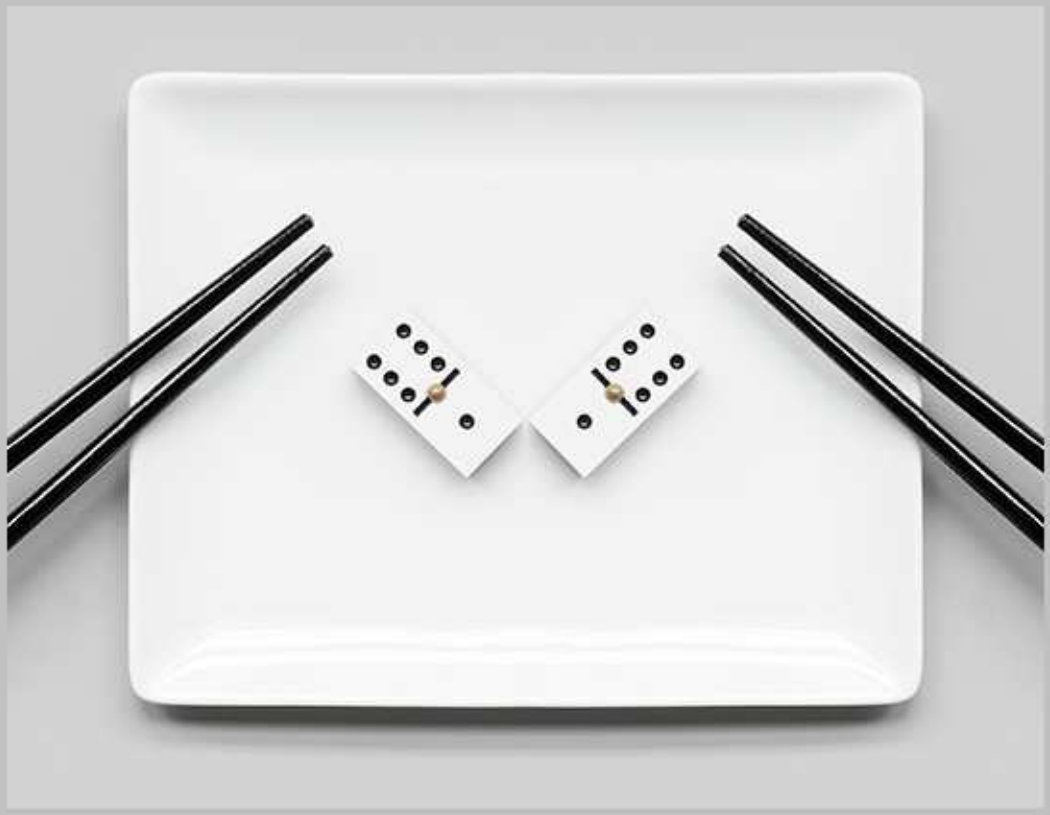


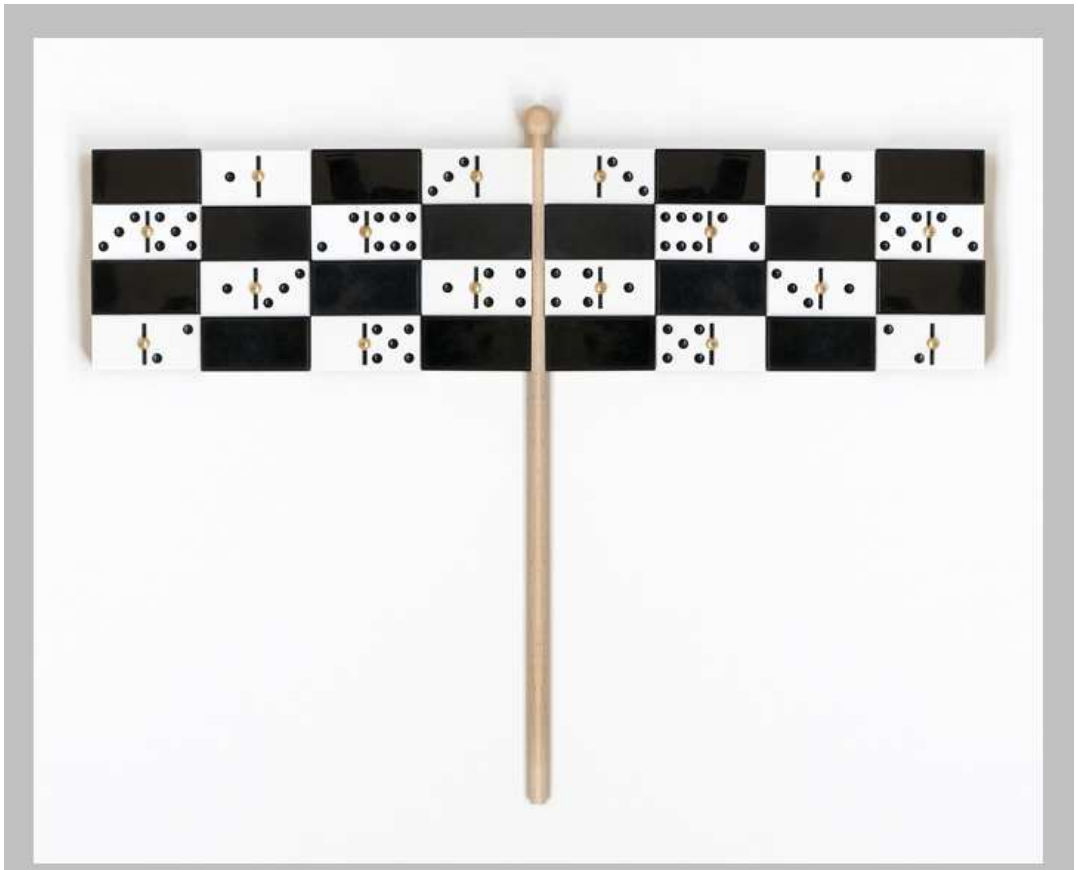


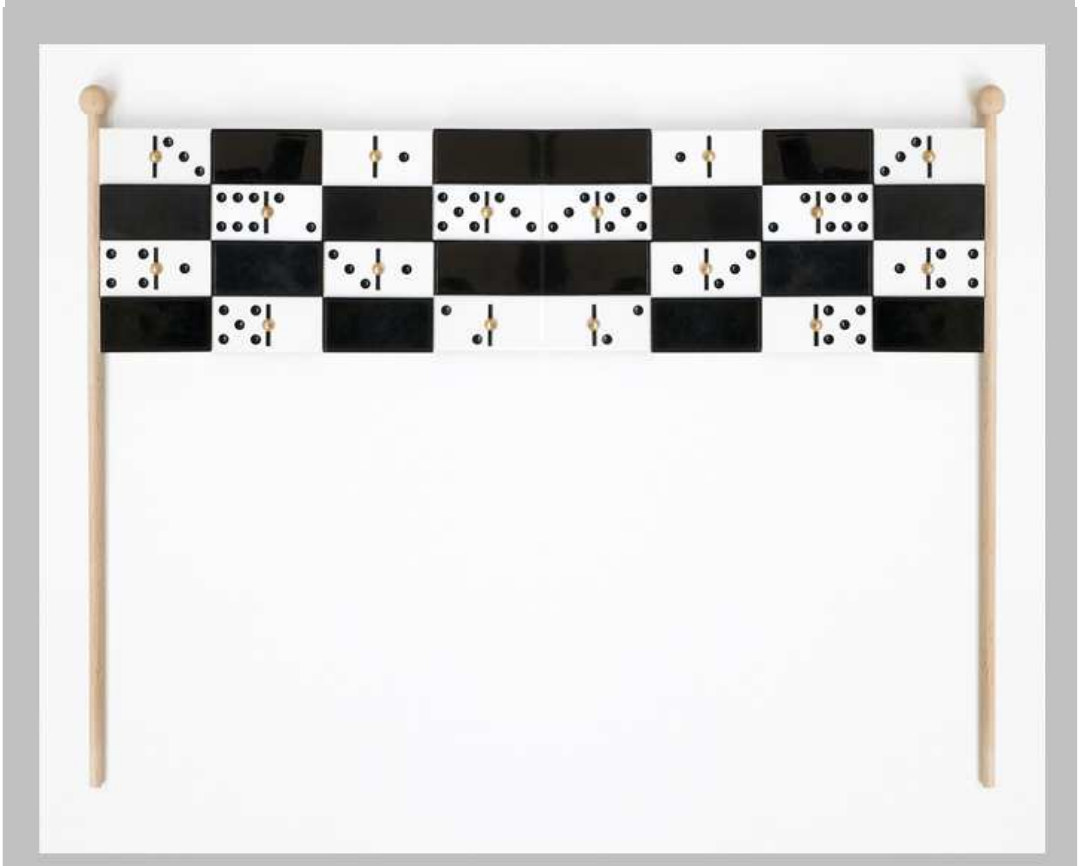


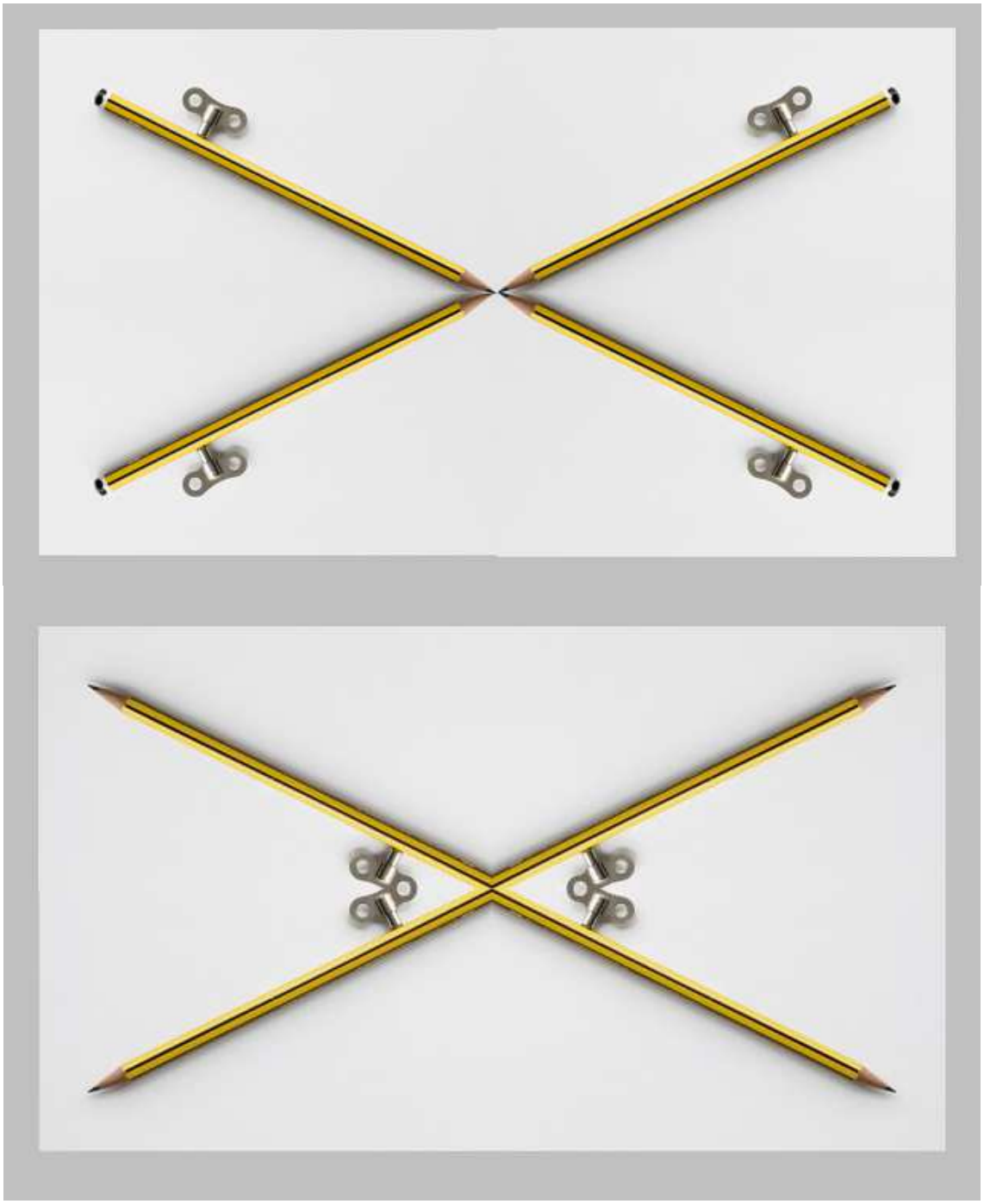


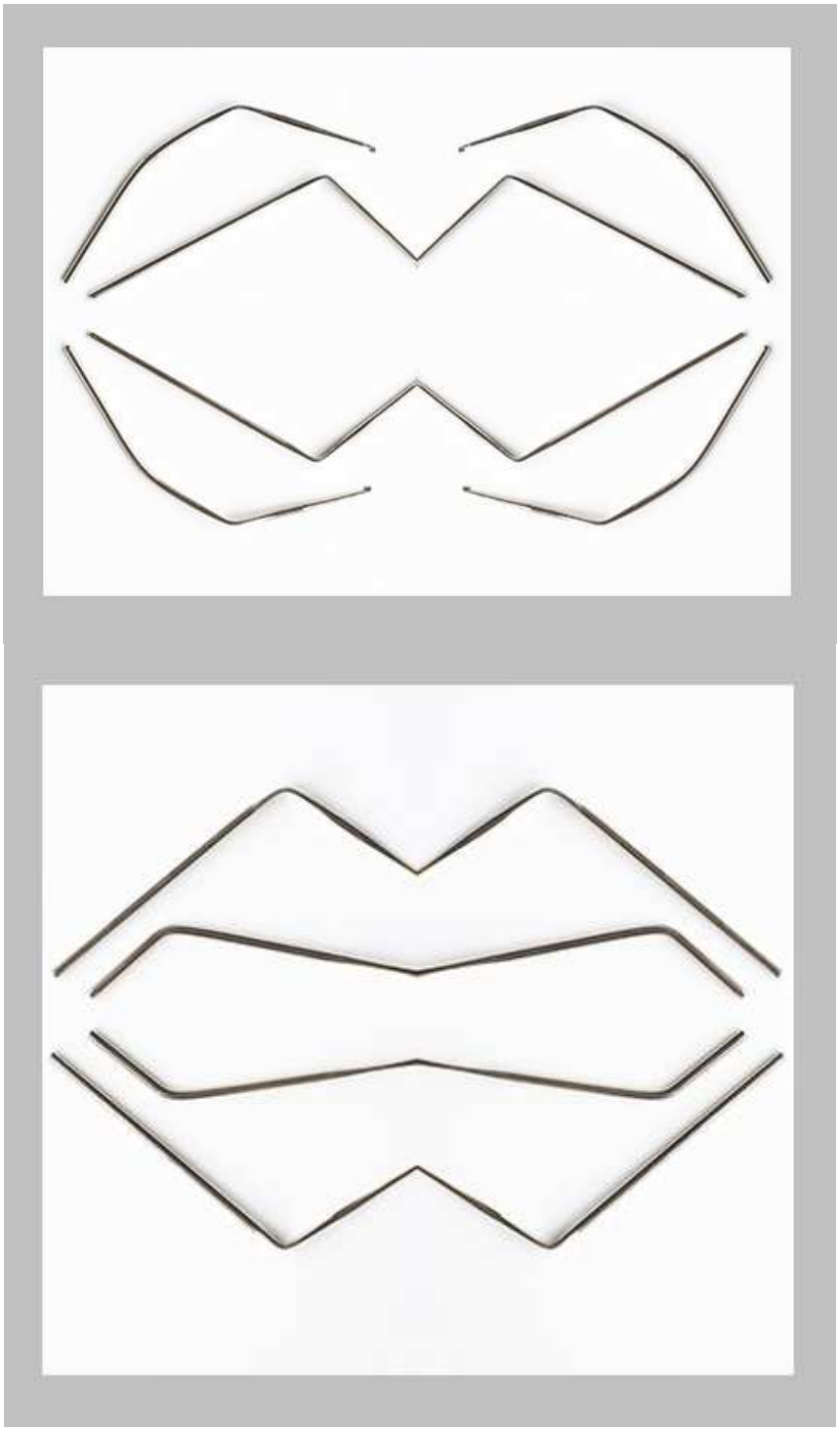


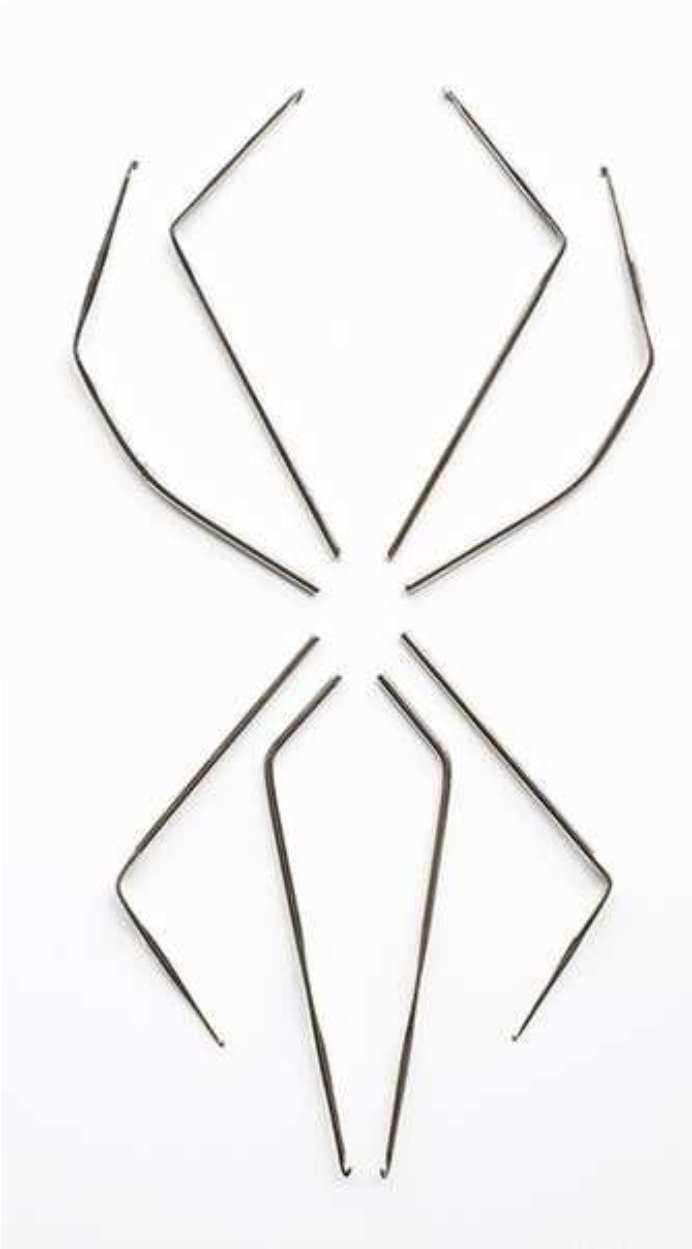












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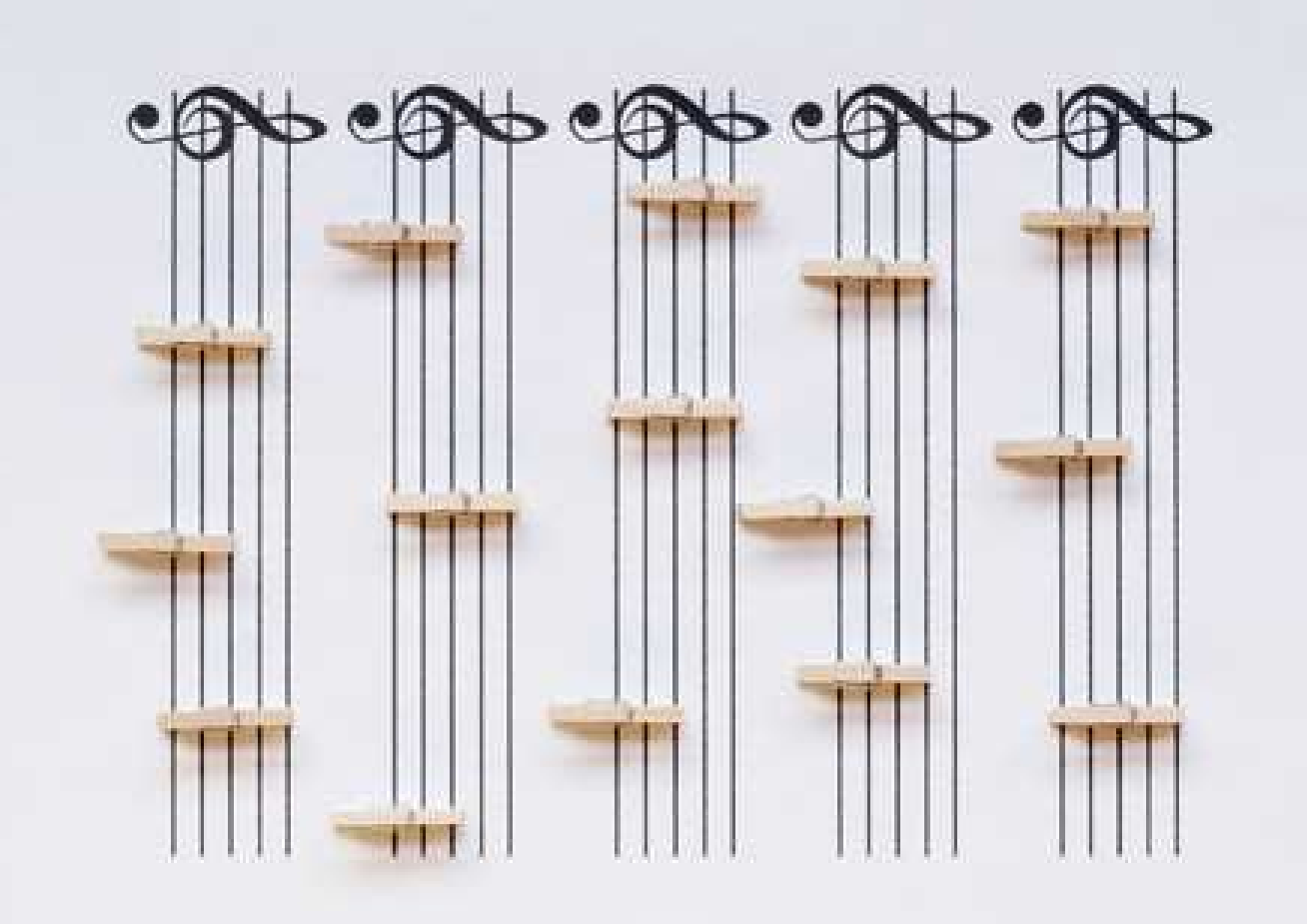
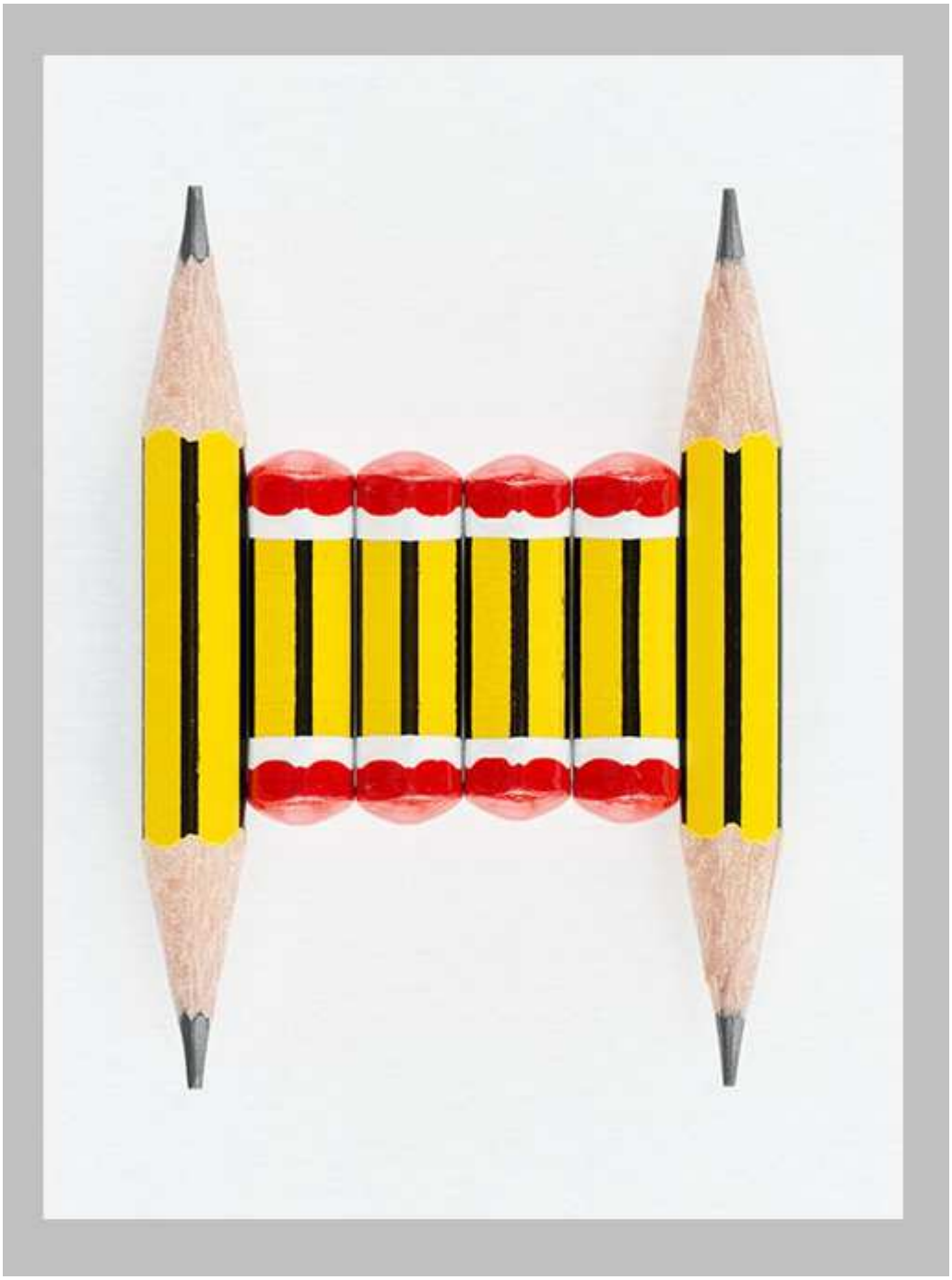
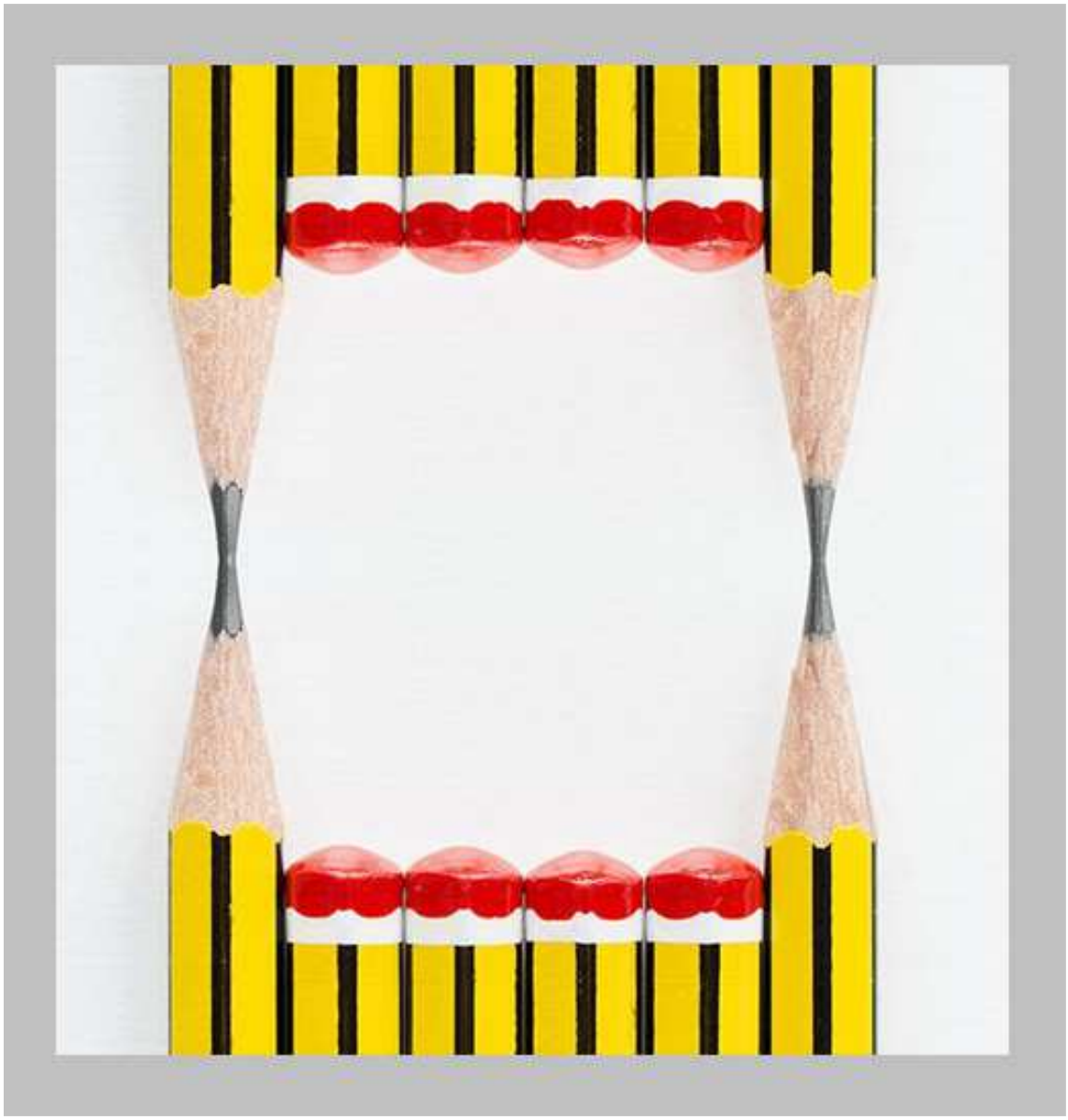
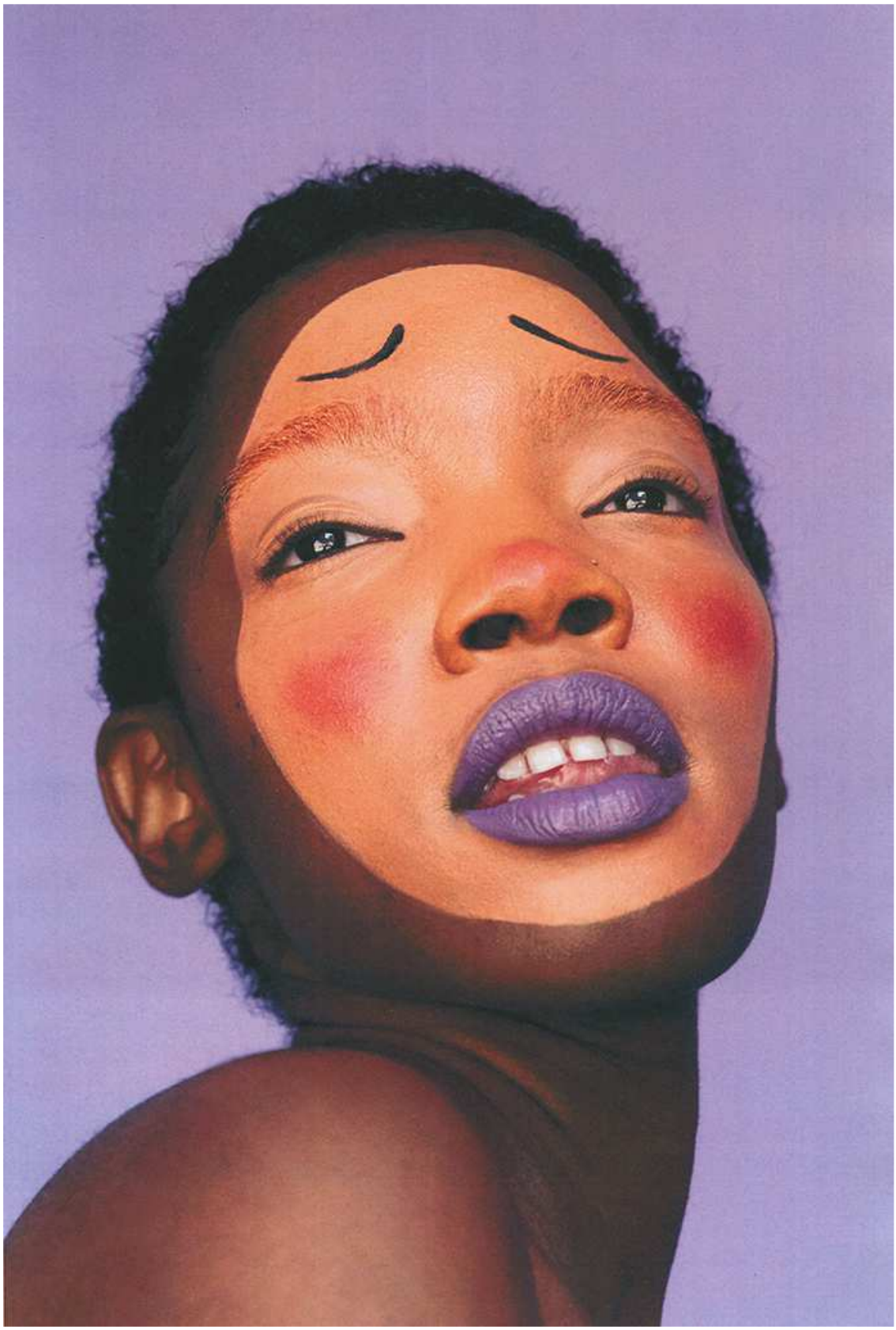


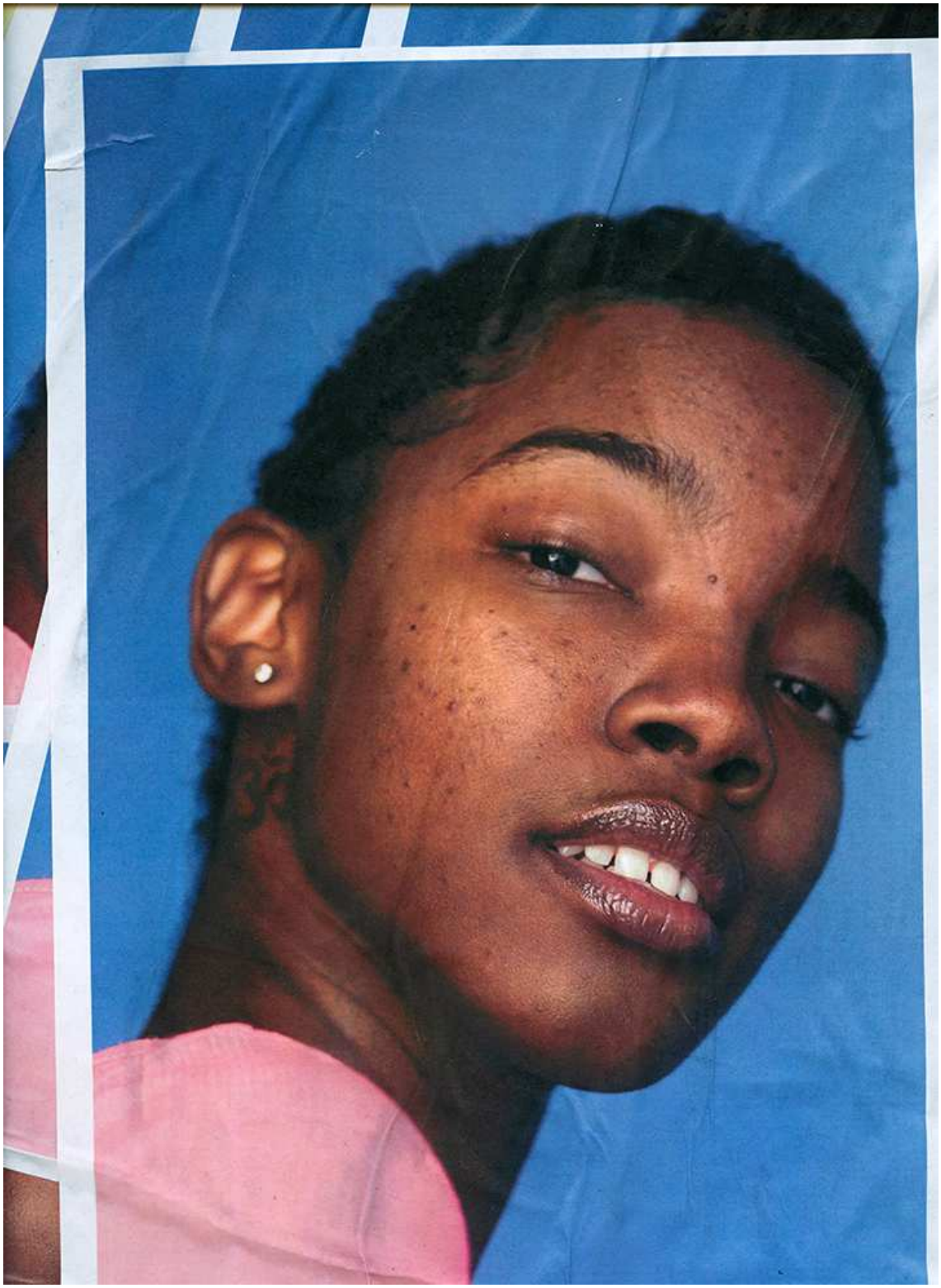


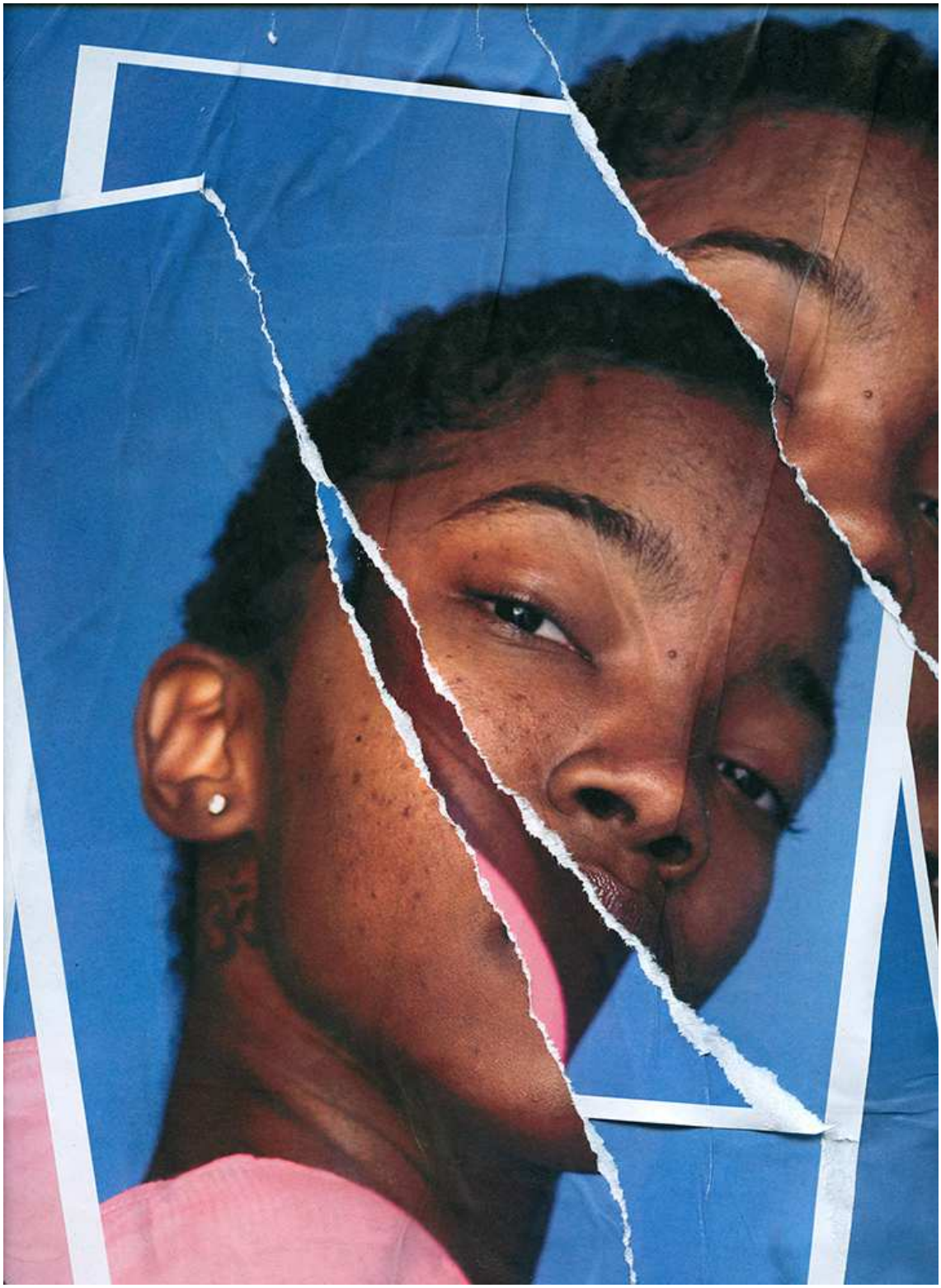


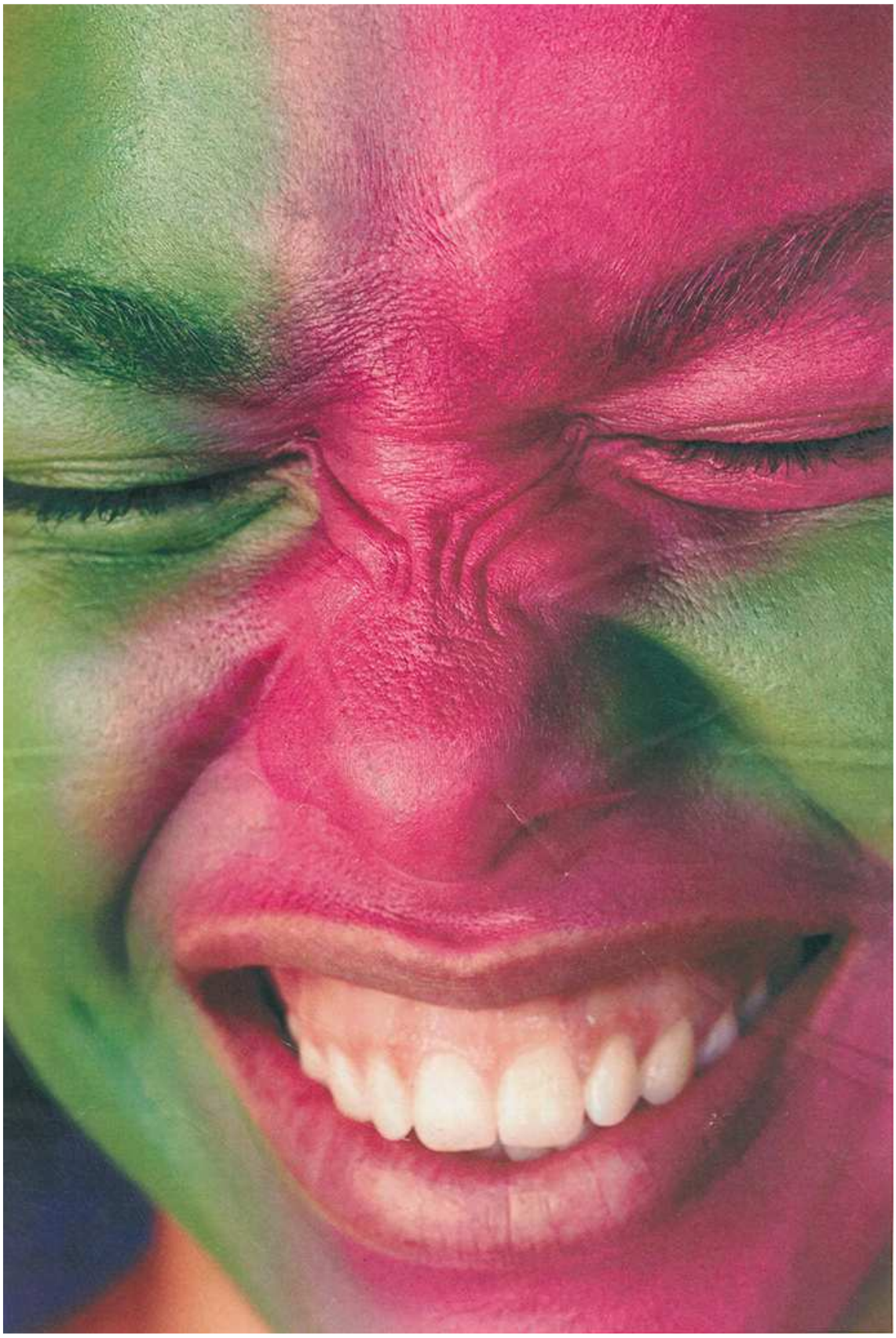
Tim Schutsky

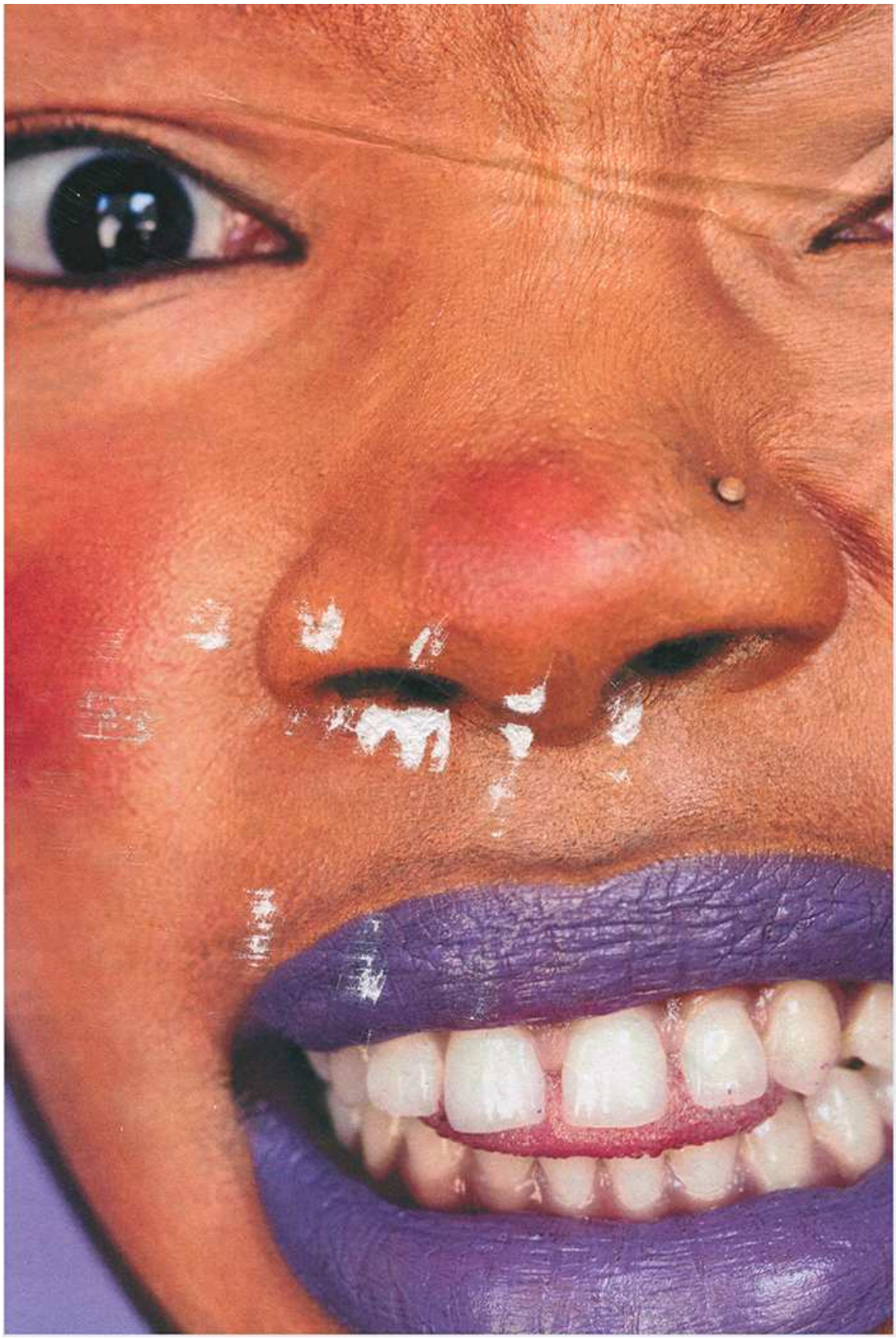
Jackson Bowley

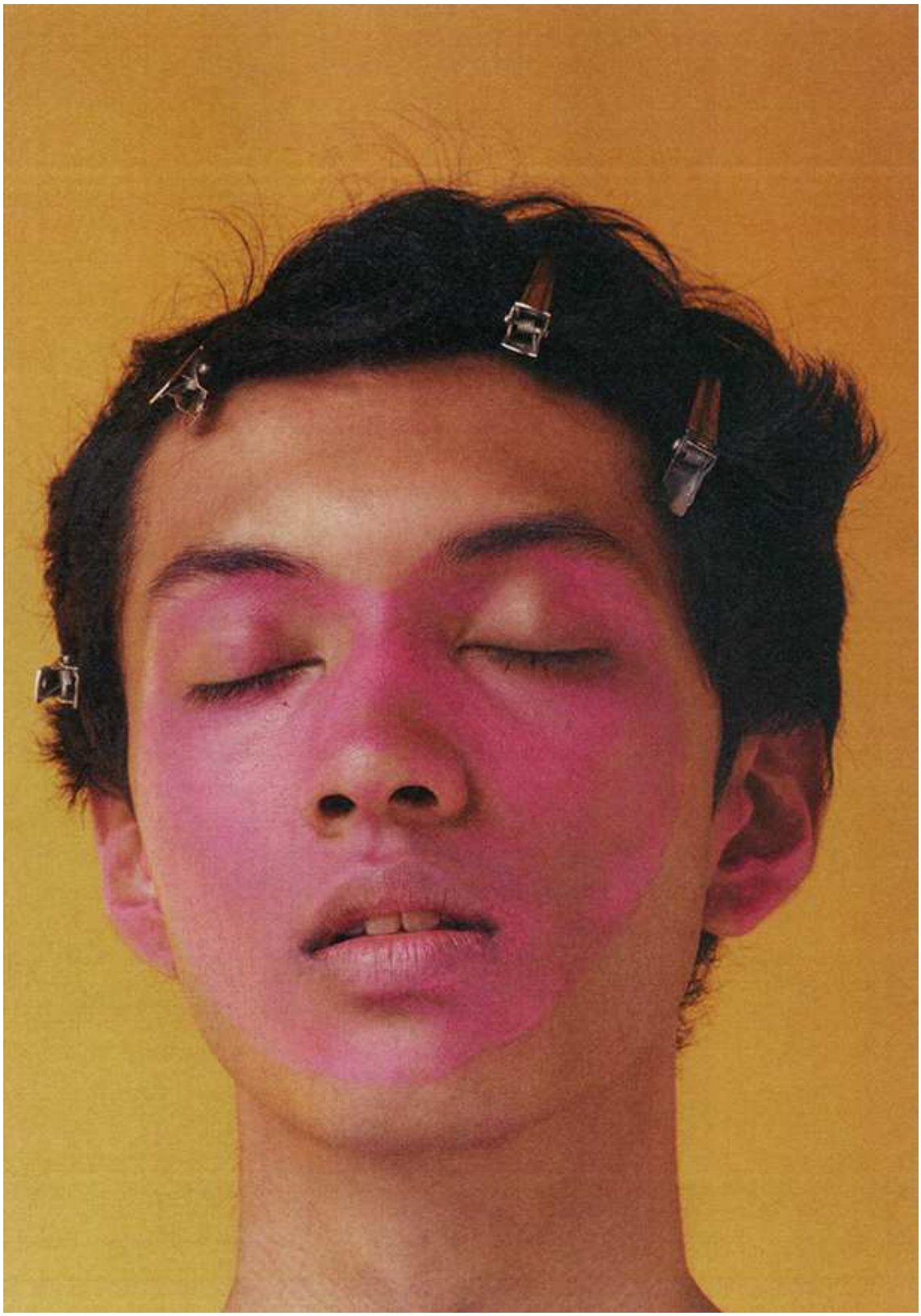


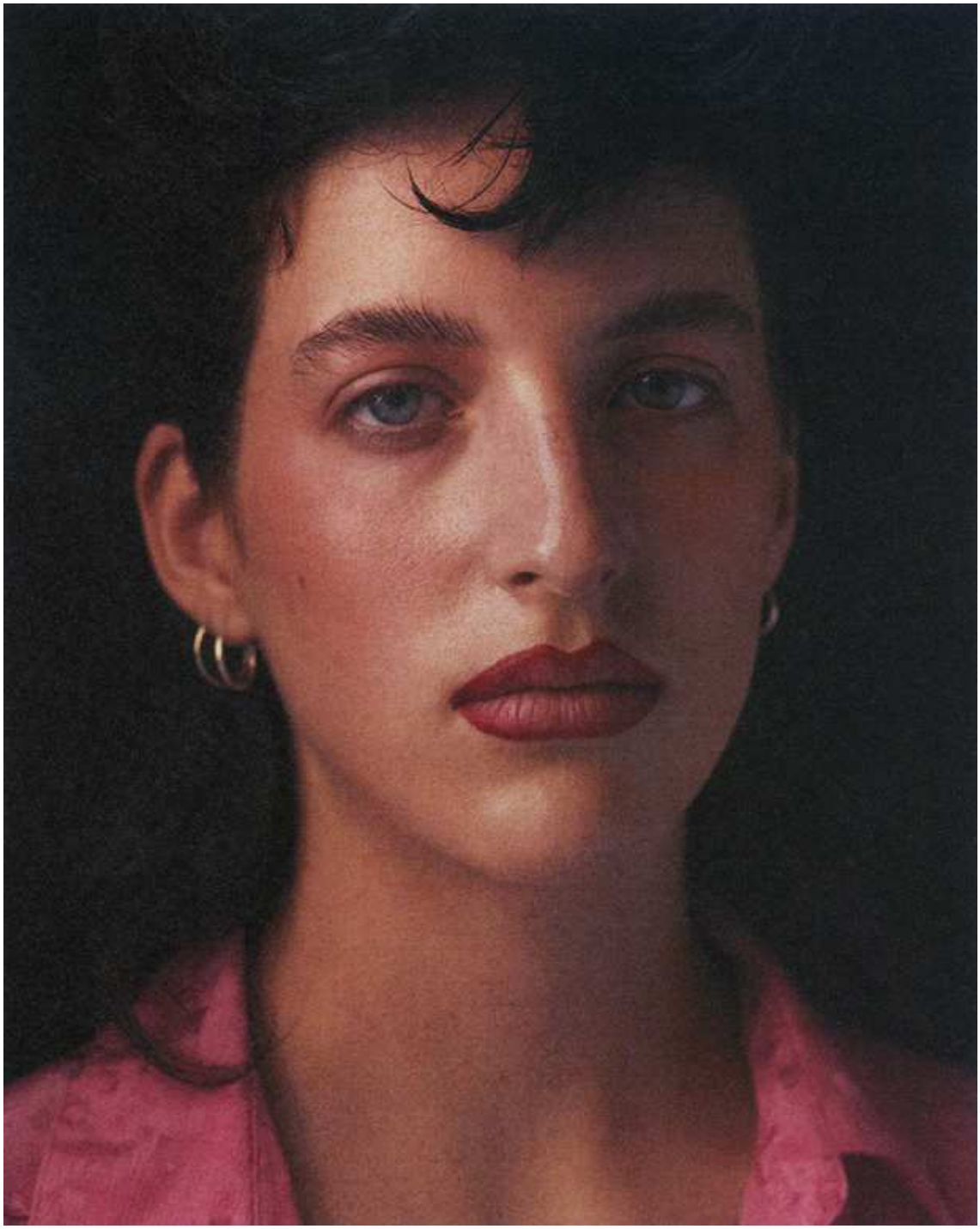


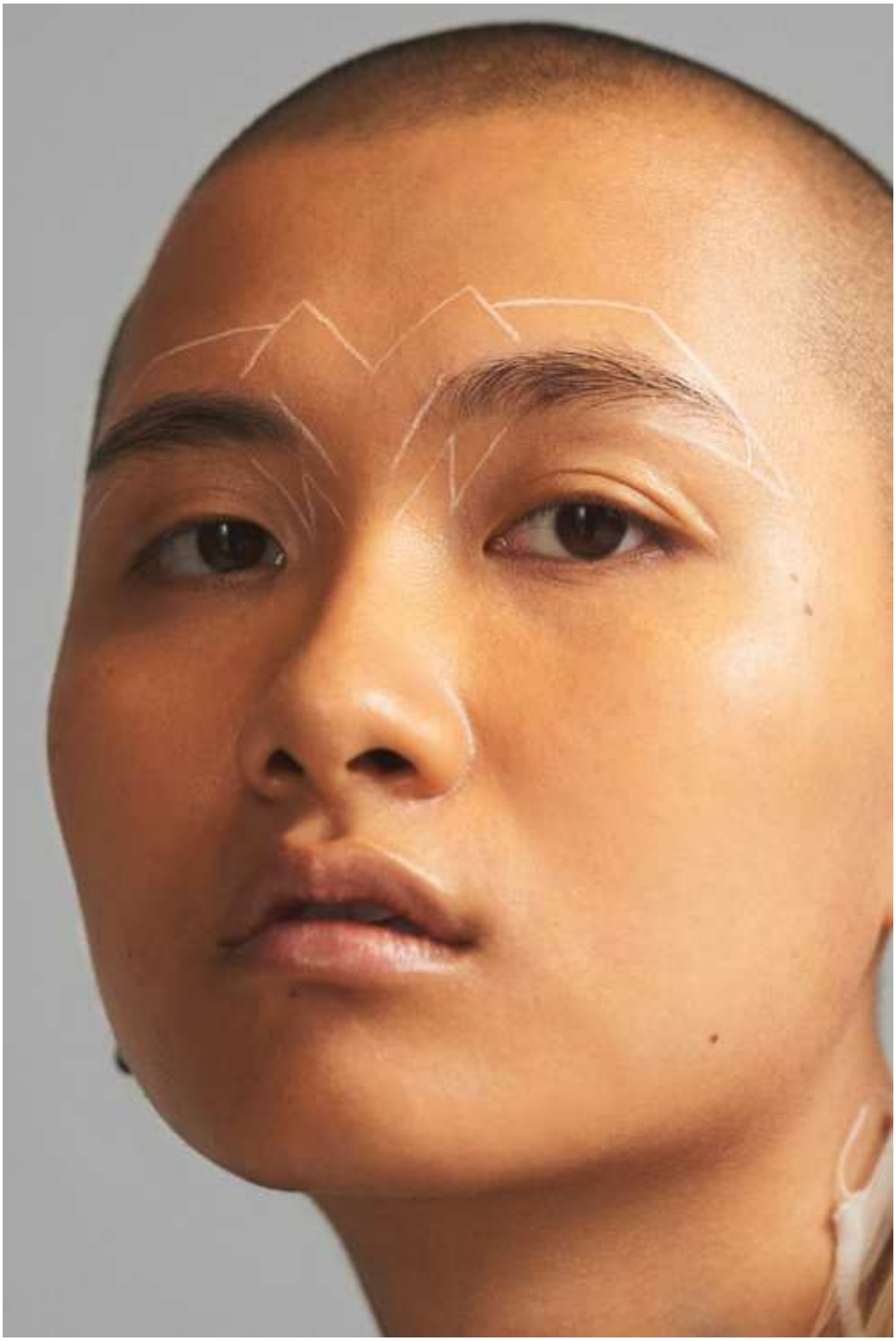




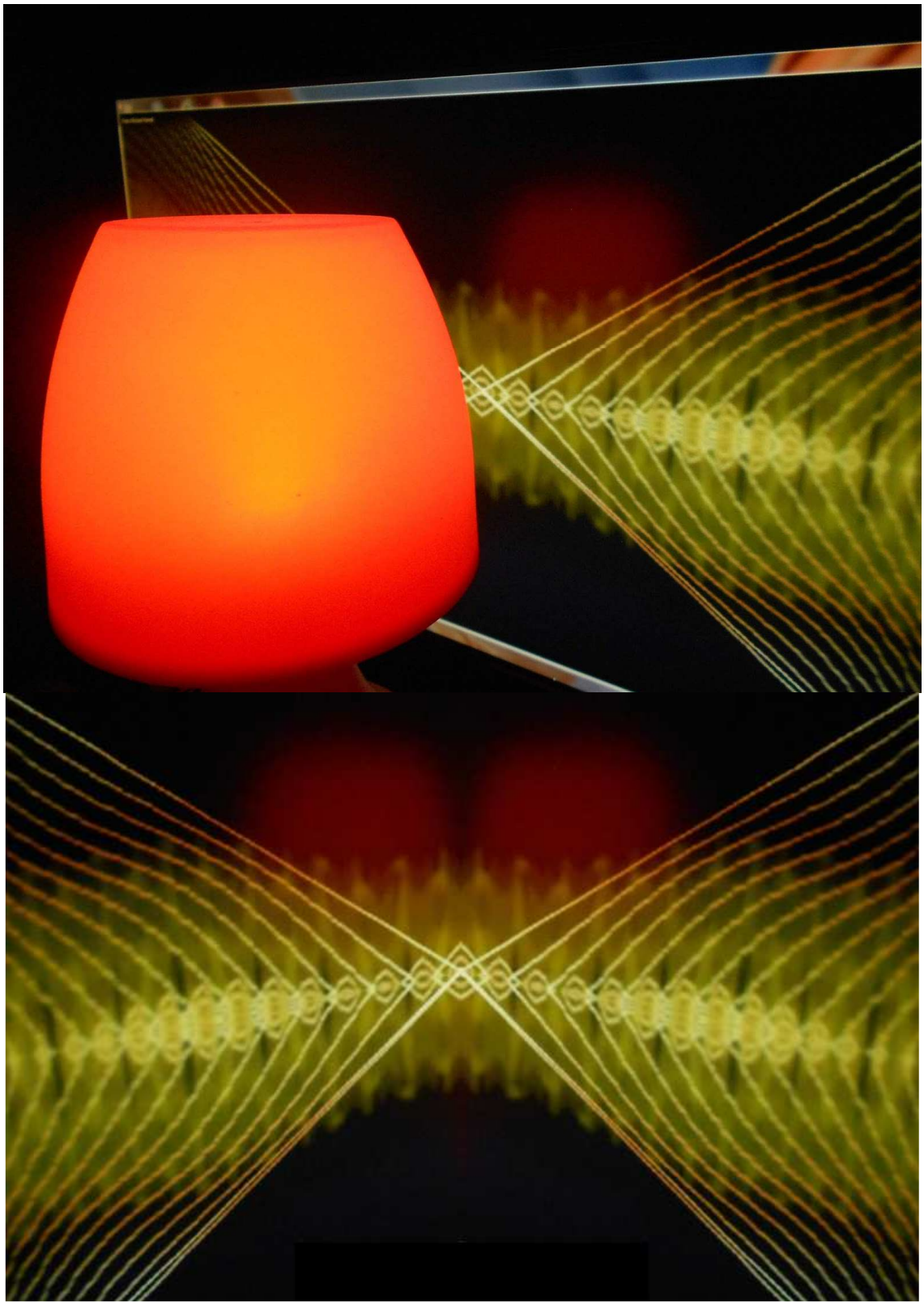


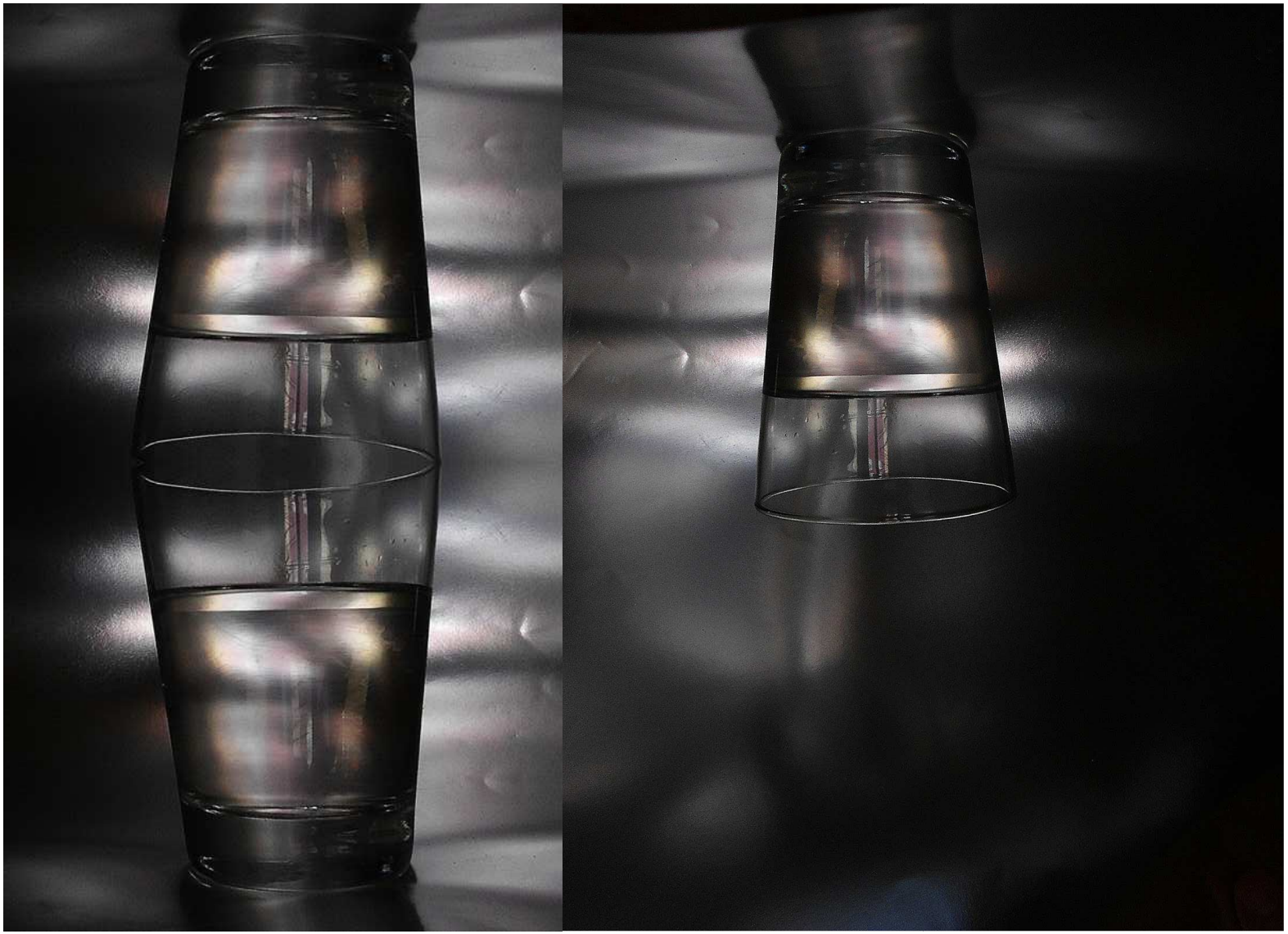


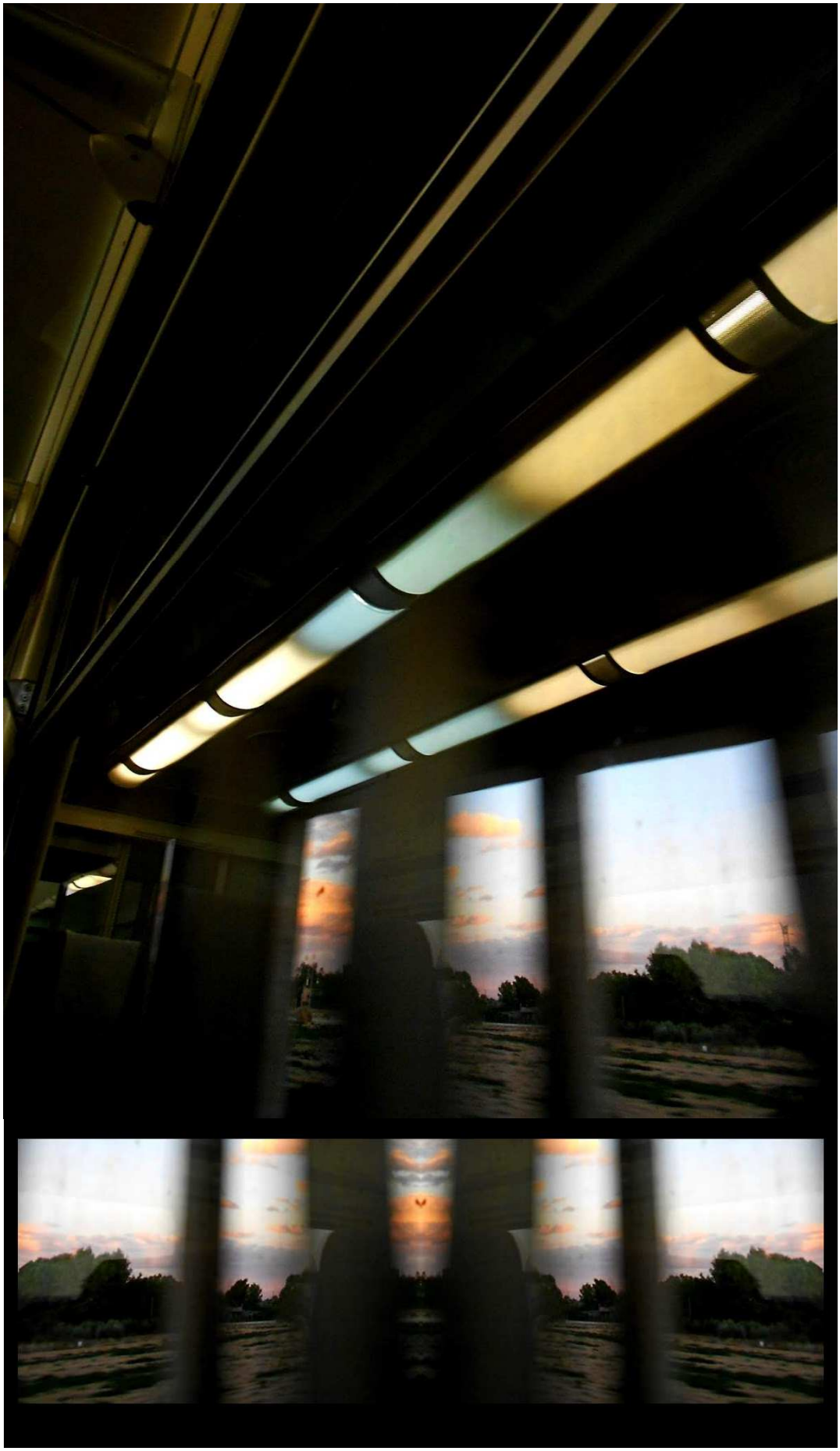


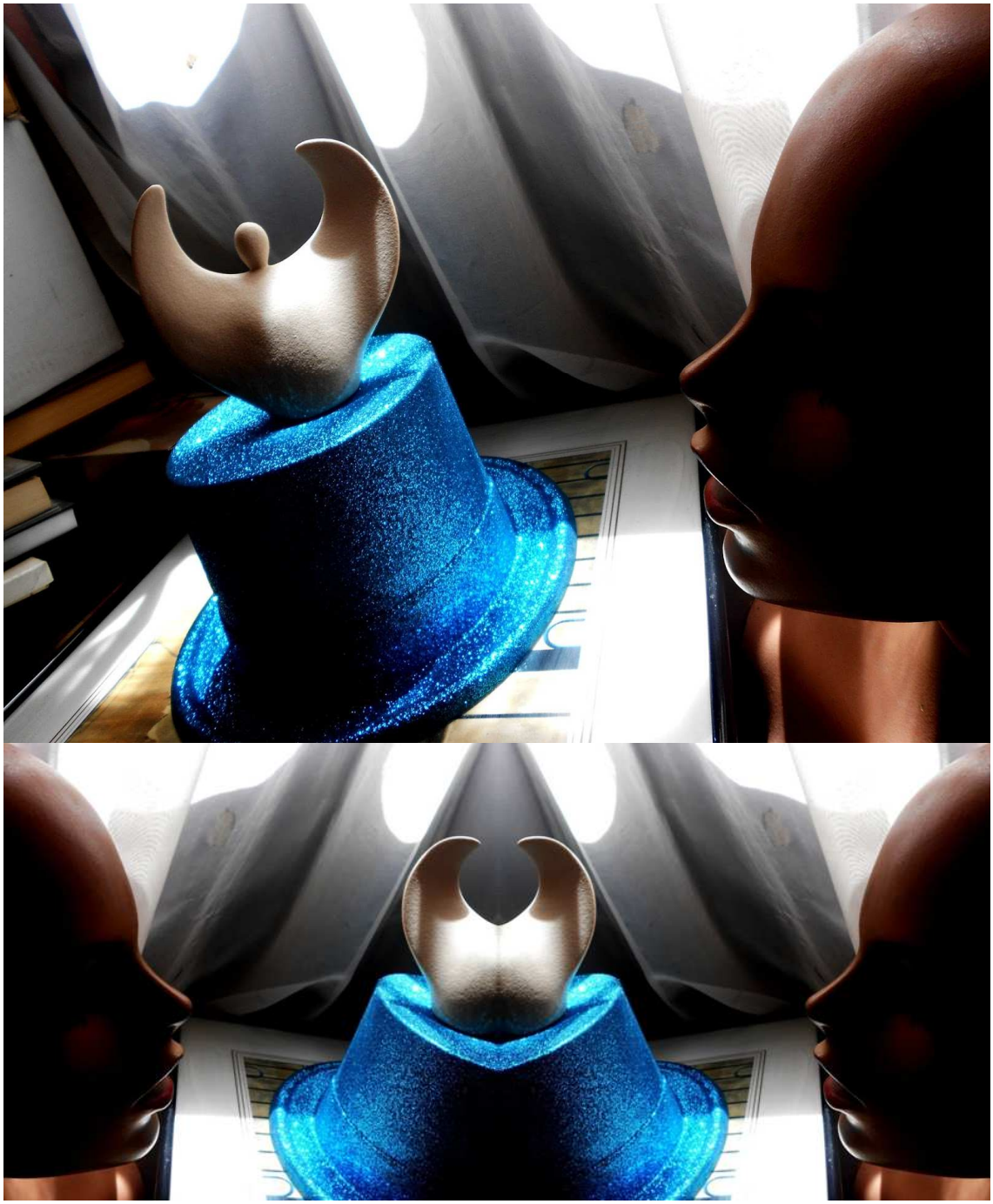


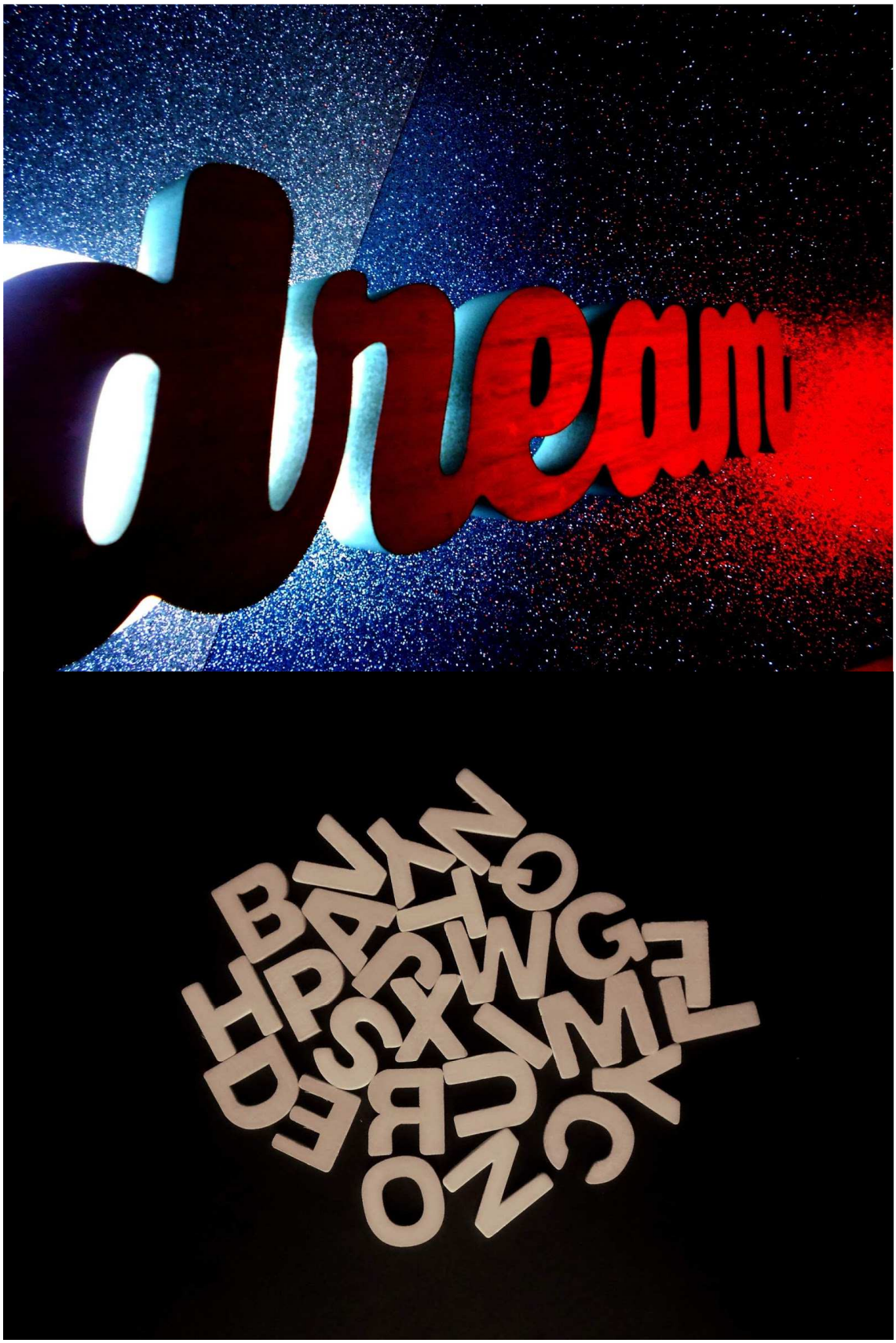
José María Piñeiro







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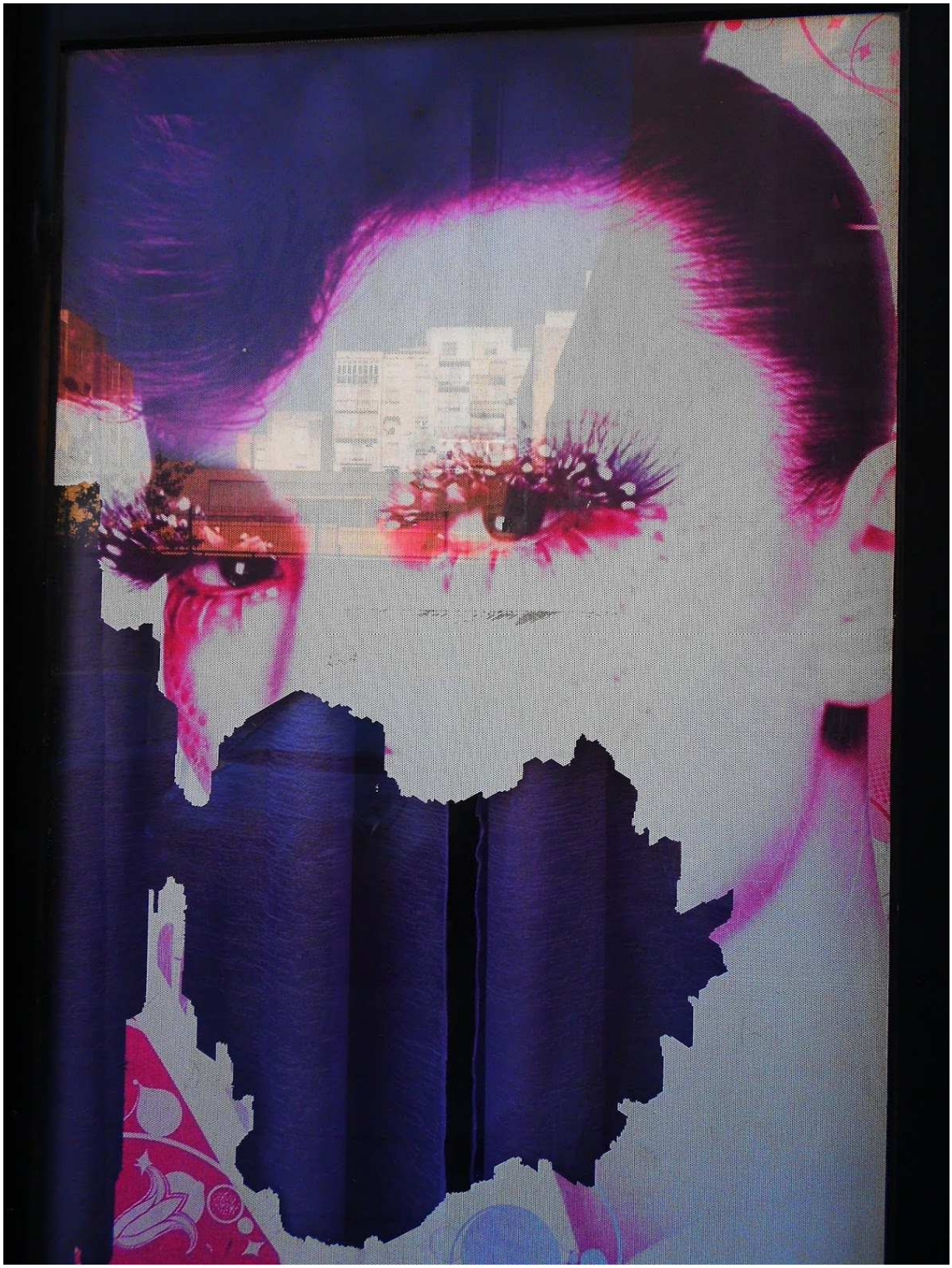

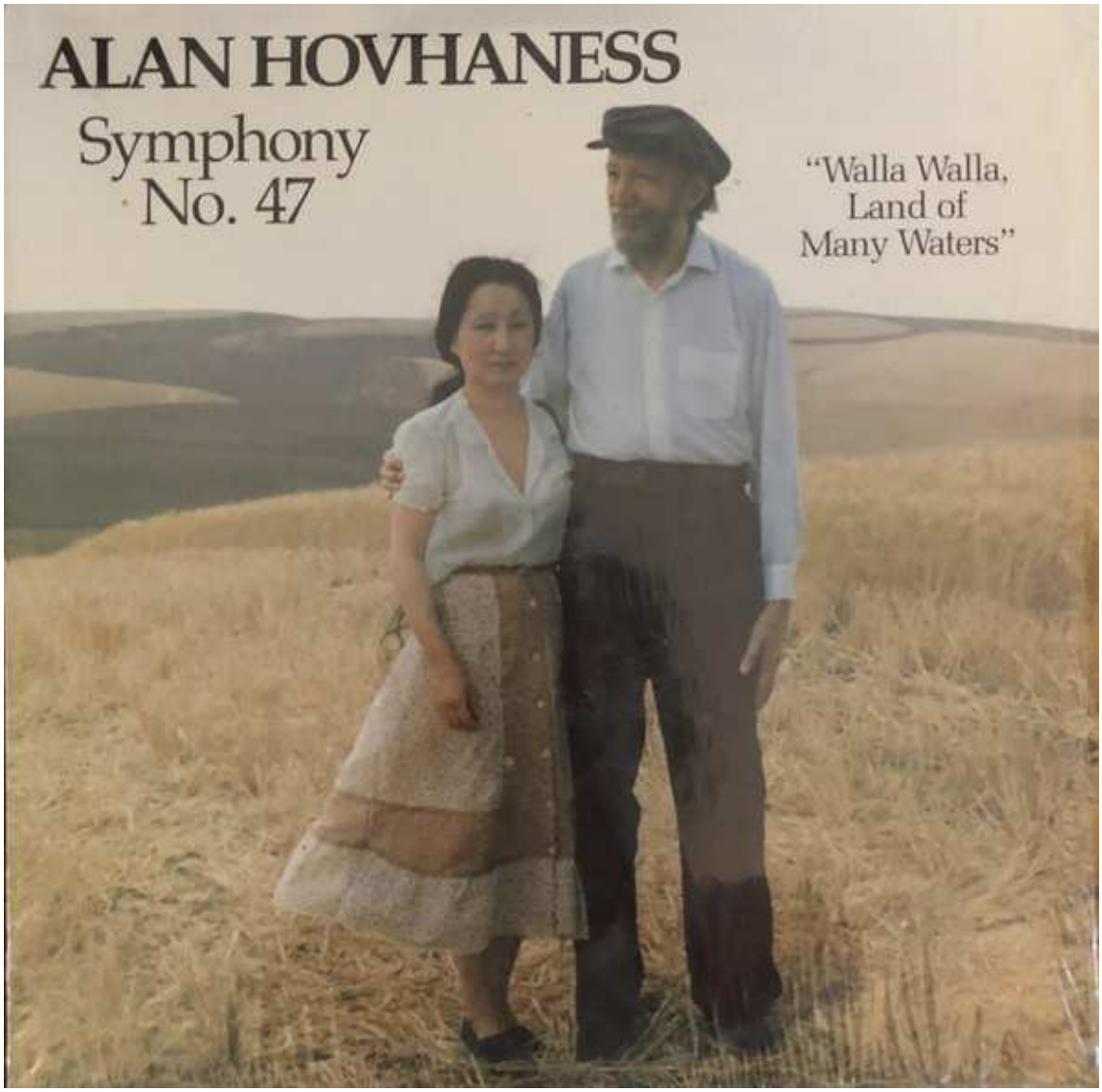

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Reij3waWtFs

ALAN HOVHANESS

Symphony No. 47

"Walla Walla, Land of Many Waters"

OPUS 348

Walla Walla Symphony

R. Lee Fiese, Conductor
Hinako Fujihara, Coloratura Soprano

Side I

1) Fantasy "Journey to Walla Walla" 15:15
2) Cantata "Land of Many Waters" 9:50

Side II

3) Love Song 13:17
4) Finale 12:59

Symphony No. 47 ("Walla Walla") by Alan Hovhaness is the culmination of several years of planning and work. The story begins in December 1979, when the Walla Walla Symphony performed Hovhaness's *And God Created Great Whales.* An invitation was extended to the composer to come to Walla Walla for the performance, which he accepted. During his visit the idea of a symphony comemmorating the Walla Walla Symphony's Diamond Jubilee was first suggested and discussed by Bertram Hoare, president of the Walla Walla Symphony at that time. After the work was officially commissioned, Hovhaness was invited to visit the area again in order to become better acquainted with the valley. When he and his wife returned in August 1980, they visited Whitman Mission, observed the wheat harvest, and talked with local residents. According to his practice, the composer carried his music notebook with him at all times, jotting down the melodic ideas which continually surface in his mind. He also discussed the orchestra with its conductor, Lee Friese.

The four-movement symphony is one of Hovhaness's longer works. "I wanted to do something big," he said, "because it's an anniversary and because it's close to where I live." Hovhaness conceived the work as a fusion of several large-scale forms. He describes it thus: "This symphony is one of my kind of symphonies – a combination of symphony and opera with many melodies, also development sections of strict canons and fugues, thus combining symphony, opera, and oratorio into one creation."

From the preceding statement it is hardly surprising that the most prominent feature of the symphony is its abundant melodies. Hovhaness explains: "I've always believed in melody, even if it isn't fashionable, I think it fills a need." Another aspect of the music to which the composer alludes is his use of counterpoint. The first and third movements begin with contrapuntal passages (canon and motet), and the finale contains two canons and a fugue. A third aspect of the work is the way Hovhaness sets off various instruments and sections of the orchestra. The strings are used alone in several passages, the brass in others, and even the percussion section has its own solo passages in the fourth movement. Various woodwind instruments are also featured in solos, particularly the English horn.

The first movement, "Journey to Walla Walla," opens with a canon for the brass instruments of the orchestra. As the canon subsides, a solo flute with harp and horn accompaniment presents music suggesting a summer journey. Menacing sounds in the percussion introduce the central portion of the movement, a "dark and wild" representation of the volcanic cloud from the eruption of Mount St. Helens in August 1980. Near the end of the movement, the reappearance of the flute melody marks the return of the peace and brightness of a summer day.

The second movement, "Land of Many Waters," a cantata for high soprano voice and orchestra, includes a demanding vocal line, rising to high F which Hovhaness wrote expressly for his wife, Hinako Fujihara. The text combines words by John Muir with those of Hinako Fujihara. An English horn solo begins the mysterious first section of the movement, prefiguring the vocal line.

> Land of many waters, murmuring of spirit,
> story of the past,
> it is far away, far away,
> still murmuring, still murmuring.

An interlude which suggests thunder and lightning leads to a passage in which the soprano vocalizes to a bell-like accompaniment. Then the soloist takes up a text by John Muir:

> "Let the children walk with nature,
> all is divine harmony."

In the final section of the movement a pastoral melody for the soprano refers to the agricultural riches of the valley.

> Oh hills of golden waves,
> oh sunlight on wheat fields.
> Dark cloud shadows wander over tall grass.
> Oh hills of golden waves.

The third movement, "Love Song" features English horn, with orchestral episodes intervening. After a brief motet for three trumpets, which opens the movement, the English horn presents a nostalgic love song. The first episode is a passage for strings alone. A lament includes other woodwind instruments in addition to the English horn followed by a hymn-like episode for strings but gradually including the other members of the orchestra. Music of angels, features flutes with English horn, and the movement ends with a majestic hymn for full orchestra.

The fourth movement, a colorful finale contains an abundance of musical ideas. An opening Song of Joy in 7/4 meter for the strings is followed by a dance. The strings take up this dance melody canonically, building to a climax and then subsiding, giving way to a new melody presented by horn and bassoon. The next section of the movement begins with a passage for the percussion section alone, to which is soon added a rhythmic passage in the strings. This rhythmic idea becomes the accompaniment for a melody in the trumpet and trombone, recalling the earlier horn-bassoon theme. The remaining trumpets and trombones take up the same melody in canon, before the texture is reduced, once more leaving the percussion to play alone. The final portion of the movement begins with a "songful" fugue. The unusually long subject is first presented in the strings, but the winds gradually enter, building to a concluding hymn, again in 7/4 meter, for the full orchestra.

Program notes by Kenneth Rudolf

Hinako Fujihara (Mrs. Alan Hovhaness), Coloratura Soprano, was born in Osaka, Japan. She has sung in Japan and the United States. She has sung the leading part in Hovhaness' opera "Tale of the Sun Goddess Going into the Stone House." She has also sung Hovhaness music with the Vermont Symphony and at the Cabrillo Festival in Aptos, California.

Recording Engineer . . . . . Glenn D. White

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msv-824 Tierra de Muchas Aguas		
García de Marina	DCCCXXIII	66
Tim Schutsky	DCCCXXIII	16
Jackson Bowley	DCCCXXIII	22
José María Piñeiro	DCCCXXIII	16
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Alan Hovhaness <1911(89)2000> <mu231>

1980 Sinfonía Nº 47 (Op. 348)

Walla Walla, Land of Many Waters

Walla Walla, Tierra de Muchas Aguas

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